**Assistance to States for infrastructure projects**

2042 SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have notified certain States/UTs for grant of assistance for investment subsidy on infrastructure projects under the 'Strengthening/development of agricultural marketing infrastructure grading and standardization Scheme';

(b) if so, the details in this regard and the criteria for identifying beneficiary States/UTs;

(c) whether Karnataka would also be considered for grant of assistance under the Scheme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The State of Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Manipur, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Sikkim, Punjab and Andaman and Nicobar Island have been notified for grant of Central assistance under the scheme.

The scheme is implemented in the States that amend the law dealing with Agricultural Produce Marketing Regulation (APMC Act), wherever required, to allow direct marketing and contract farming and to permit setting up of competitive markets in private and cooperative sectors.

(c) and (d) In order to become eligible for grant of assistance under this Scheme, Karnataka will have to amend its APMC as indicated above.

**Starvation-free nation**

†2043.SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have announced its resolution to make the country a starvation-free and glorious nation by December, 2007 while the foodgrain production has declined to 8 per cent during

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

the last four years and the population has gone up in the same proportion; and

(b) if so, the details of effective steps taken by Government to increase the foodgrain production and bring down the population in order to make the nation starvation-free by year 2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) No, Sir. The Government is implementing various schemes to increase foodgrains production and to ensure adequate availability of foodgrains in the country. During the period 2000-01 to 2004-05 the average growth rate of foodgrains production was 2.1 per cent per annum compared with the average annual growth in population of 1.7 per cent during the same period.

(b) The programmes aimed at boosting production and productivity of foodgrains include the following:—

(i) Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Rice Based Cropping Systems Areas (ICDP-Rice)

(ii) Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Wheat Based Cropping System Areas (ICDP-Wheat).

(iii) Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Coarse Cereals Based Cropping Systems Areas (ICDP-Coarse Cereals)

The thrust of agriculture policy continues to be on schemes and programmes designed to raise production and productivity in agriculture through transfer of improved technology based on field demonstrations, training of farmers, supply of quality inputs, improvement in irrigation facilities, pest control measures etc. The centrally sponsored scheme, namely, Macro Management, was evolved by integrating 27 schemes. Under this scheme, which is designed to supplement/complement efforts put in by States, there is flexibility to develop and pursue activities through Work Plans based on regional priorities. The approved pattern of assistance under the scheme is in the ratio of 90:10 for the Centre and States except in the case of North-Eastern States, who are given 100 per cent central assistance.

A new Centrally Sponsored Scheme on 'On Farm Water Management for increasing Crop Production in Eastern India' was launched from 2002-03.

The objective of the scheme is to increase production and productivity of crops through exploiting abundant ground/surface water, in the Eastern India. The scheme is a back-ended credit linked one and is being implemented through the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development.

As regards pulses, assistance is provided for purchase of breeder seed, production of foundation seed, production and distribution of certified seed, distribution of seed minikits etc. under the centrally sponsored scheme of Integrated Scheme for Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM) launched in April 2004.

The National Population Policy 2000 envisages to address the unmet needs for contraception, health care infrastructure, and health personnel and to provide integrated service delivery for basic reproductive and child health care. The medium-term objective is to bring the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) to replacement levels by 2010. In pursuance of these objectives various National Socio Demographic Goals have been set which include *inter alia:*

* Promote delayed marriage for girls, not earlier than age 18 and preferably after 20 years of age.
* Achieve universal access to information/counselling, and services for fertility regulation and contraception with a wide basket of choices.
* Promote vigorously the small family norm to achieve replacement levels of TFR.

**Helping debt ridden farmers**

2042. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the past few years, over 4000 farmers, many from the cotton and dryland belt of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, parts of Kerala and Punjab have killed themselves as they were trapped in a vicious circle of debt, crop failure, penury and extreme hopelessness;

(b) whether Government are aware of the fact that Indian agriculture is getting increasingly risky, expensive and water dependent; and